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Sermon for Good Friday.

MARK 15, 37. 39.

Friday is that day of the week on which God performed the two works which are the most memorable monuments of His love to man: the Creation and the Redemption. It was on Friday, the sixth day of creation, that God made man, giving him a wonderfully formed body and breathing an immortal spirit into his nostrils. Again it was on Friday, the sixth day of the week, that Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, was hanged on the cross to make expiation for the sin of man and to redeem his soul from everlasting banishment. If that first Friday on which God made man and placed him into that abode of happiness, the garden of Eden, speaks to us of His love and goodness, much rather is that other Friday a monument of infinite love, on which the Creator Himself suffered the pangs of death, that He might restore man to righteousness and true holiness which man had forfeited by his own waywardness.

Indeed, if that second great Friday had not come, the first Friday had better never been. If man had not been redeemed he had better never been made. Without that great deed which was done on Calvary we would be without hope in the world and must soon sink into everlasting darkness. But since Jesus Christ said to the malefactor at His side: "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," we can spend our days on earth in the blessed hope that, dying with Christ, we shall go to a world "wherein dwelleth righteousness." Now, therefore, we have two great reasons to rejoice before God and to be thankful unto Him: because He has created us and has placed all visible creatures at our service, and because He has redeemed us by His blood and has prepared mansions for us not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Since the word of creation went forth no other deed of God speaks so powerfully to the heart and soul of man as does the death

of His Son on the cross, the word: God bled and died that man might live. Contemplating this deed I cannot otherwise than exclaim: In desperate straits, indeed, must I have been, because to save my soul God Himself must bleed and die, and O what unspeakable happiness and glory must be in store for me seeing I am purchased with so great a price! Therefore, to promote the right and fruitful Good Friday meditation let me speak to you of:

THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST.

Let us

- I. *Search for the cause of His death, and*
- II. *Appropriate its blessed fruit.*

I.

A thorough acquaintance with the history of Christ's suffering is preeminently important to every Christian, because it furnishes the key to the right understanding of the entire Scriptures. In the Passion history the Law and the Gospel, the justice and the mercy of God are pictured to us as in a mirror. And in it all the two questions of the greatest consequence are these: What is the cause and what is the fruit of Christ's suffering and death? No one can be firmly settled and grounded in the faith who has not a knowledge of the right true answer to these questions.

What was the cause of Christ's death? Had He committed a criminal act on which the law denounced the sentence of death? He was accused of two such acts, but in neither case was He found guilty. He was first brought before the ecclesiastical court of the Jews, and false witnesses were produced against Him, but their testimony could not be made to agree. Then the high priest artfully asked Him: "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" and when Jesus affirmed this the high priest rent his garment and pronounced Him a blasphemer and therefore guilty of death according to the law of Moses. But all the members of that august council well knew that this was only a conclusion of the high priest, yet they did not go to search in the Scriptures as to whether Jesus was the Christ or not. They were gratified at finding a pretense to condemn Jesus to death with a show of right. Then He was brought to the civil court and was accused of fomenting an insurrection with the object of making Himself king of the Jews, but Pilate, after examining Jesus, declared he could find no cause of death in Him. Only the clamors of the multitude and the threats of the chief priests induced Pilate to deliver Jesus to be crucified. He had spoken nothing against the law of Moses, neither had He lifted up His hand against Caesar. There was nothing in Him deserving capital punishment.

Was, then, the unjust sentence of Pilate the cause of His death? Pilate pronounced Him innocent and yet gave orders for His crucifixion, and this sentence of Pilate caused Him to be led forth, but the sentence itself did not put Him to death. Many a one has been sentenced to death and was not executed. But Jesus was raised on the cross. Was crucifixion the cause of His death? We are accustomed to say, and so the Scriptures likewise say, that He died the death of the cross, and this is true, for He did die on the cross. But when we inquire after the cause of His death, we must search deeper and must ask: Was it crucifixion that took His life from Him? Here our text answers in the negative. *"And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And when the centurion which stood over against Him saw that He so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly, this man was the Son of God."* This centurion had no doubt seen others die on the cross, and he knew full well how the life of those must end that died of crucifixion. But here was something extraordinary, so extraordinary that the centurion declared Jesus was the Son of God. Those dying of crucifixion died from exhaustion. Their strength was gradually consumed, so that with the last particle of strength the last spark of vitality died away, and one dying in this way at the last had not strength enough even to whisper. But Jesus showed that His strength was not consumed; for He died crying out loud. He died *on* the cross, but He did not die *of* crucifixion. It was not the spikes driven through His hands and feet, it was not the loss of blood, it was not the utter consumption of strength that made His soul separate from His body. Neither was it the spear thrust through His side; for this was done after He had already died. It is clear, it is undeniable: the cause of His death was not physical. Neither iron nor weakness took His life from Him. Of His life He had before said: "No man taketh it from me." If He had died of the wounds which the Roman soldiers inflicted on Him they would have taken His life from Him. But it was not that. This does not conflict with the words of Peter when he cast up to the Jews: "Ye denied the Holy One, and the Just, and killed the Prince of life." They on their part, as far as they were concerned, did kill Him; for they delivered Him to be crucified. Nevertheless it was as He said, no man took His life from Him. It was not a physical necessity that ended His life.

If not a physical, was there a moral cause of death in Jesus Christ? We must die because we are sinners. "The wages of sin is death." Man is born corrupt in soul and body, and therefore he must die. Born a sinner the germ of death is born with man; for

"the sting of death is sin." Was there such a moral cause of death in Jesus Christ? There was not. Conceived by the Holy Ghost He was born without sin, and guile was not found in His mouth. Yea, He was God, holier than the angels. He was not a sinner, and there was no moral cause or necessity of death in Him.

Jesus Christ did not die as we do. We die because we *must*; He did not die because He *had to*, but because He *wanted* to die. He had said: "I lay down my life," and so He did, as this text testifies: *Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.*" He died of His own will and accord. He willed it, and His heart stood still and His soul separated from His body. Therefore His very death proved Him the almighty God, as that heathen centurion testified. So no creature can die. A man can commit suicide by doing violence to himself, but no man can say: I will to die, and by the mere power of his will sever the bond between soul and body. So Jesus Christ died, and in doing this He did the will of His Father. He had said: "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." It was the Father's will that He should die, and He willed to do the Father's will and died.

But here our inquiry cannot stop. We know that God has a reason for all that He does. Why was it the Father's will that His holy Child Jesus should die on the cross? The holy Scriptures tell us in a hundred places. "All we like sheep have gone astray; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him." "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree." "God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." There it is, clear and simple. The immediate cause of His death, that which directly brought about the separation of body and soul, was His own and the Father's will; for by His own will He gave up the ghost agreeably to the will of His Father. But the reason why both He and His Father willed His death was because He was the Bearer of the world's sin. Here we have arrived at the final, the ultimate, the actual cause of Christ's death. It was the world's sin. The world's sin was laid upon Him, and on its account He died. The world's sin was accounted to Him, and the unalterable law of divine justice is: "The wages of sin is death."

Here we have the answer to our first question. The real, true cause of Christ's death was the sin of man. Let us make this acknowledgment full and free. We, we belong to the company of those who caused His death. Let us not put the fault on the Jews.

They have their burden to bear. But if we will not acknowledge that we with our sins caused His death, we can have no part in His salvation. If we belong to the human family, we belong to those who caused His death. Yes, indeed! this day, the memorial day of His death and burial, we have all reason to bow our heads with shame and to say:

Whence come these sorrows, whence this mortal anguish?
It is *my* sin for which Thou, Lord, dost languish.
Yea, all the wrath, the woe Thou dost inherit,
'Tis I do merit.

II.

And now let us briefly inquire after the *fruit* of Christ's death. The answer may be given in one word, a word with a world of meaning in it, the word atonement, atonement for the world's sin. Pointing to Jesus, John Baptist pronounced Him "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." And Isaiah, the Evangelist of the Old Testament, testified concerning Him: "Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin." By the death of Christ full satisfaction is made to divine justice for the world's sin. By His death such righteousness is restored for our entire race as though not one sin had been committed by man on earth. What Adam and his children have done wrong is atoned for by the death of the Son of God. I say, and I mean in full what I say, what man has done wrong is all righted in the sight of the Father by the death of Christ. His atonement avails for every man. If but one man were excepted, if Christ had made atonement for the sins of all save one, then must I fear that I might be that one unredeemed sinner. But the world's sin was accounted to Him, and for it He suffered and died. What I have done amiss Jesus Christ has made satisfaction for it all and in full.

Ask you: How can this thing be? How can the death of one be the atonement, complete satisfaction for all the sins of the unnumbered millions of Adam's children? I answer: Great cause, great effect. He that could yield up His soul on the cross with an outcry is the almighty and infinite God. There is here an inscrutable mystery, a deep which neither I nor any other mortal can fathom. Can you calculate the sum of the world's sin? Imagine all the sins of all men from Adam to the last on earth brought together in one heap. What a sum! What an ocean! What a depth of wickedness! The highest algebra would be insufficient to begin to calculate the sum of the world's sin. Can the death of Christ atone for it? What is this earth in comparison to the universe? A mere speck. And what is the universe in comparison to God, its

Maker? Nothing but a drop clinging to a bucket. What will the world's sin be in comparison to the value of the blood and death of God's own Son? Must it not shrink to an atom and, placed in the balance, be raised like a feather? The sum of the world's sin is beyond computation, but the value of Christ's death is infinite as is God Himself.

But why think of the world's sin? Why attempt to compute the incomputable? Dear soul, look to thy own sin. Is the death of the Son of God sufficient to atone for thy guilt? Surely, He is greater than thou, and the atoning value of His death is greater than the guilt of thy sin. Wrap thyself in His death as in a shroud, and thy sin must disappear as a pebble cast into the sea, and the righteousness adorning thee will outshine the twinkling of the stars and will put to shame the splendor of the sun. Cling to Jesus Christ, and there can be no condemnation for you. He that tasted death for you will not suffer your soul to die. Amen.

F. K.

Address to a Class of Catechumens on the Day of their Confirmation.

REV. 3, 11.

IN CHRIST JESUS, OUR GOOD SHEPHERD, DEARLY BELOVED
CHILDREN:—

This is a day of great joy. For Christ and for His Church it is a day of triumph. For why are we here assembled? Listen! Years ago, when you were still infants, you were brought to God, your heavenly Father, in holy Baptism. There God, the gracious and merciful Lord, adopted you into His family as His children. 'Tis true, you could not speak and confess the faith of your hearts, but others, Christian friends, performed for you this service of love, and expressed for you your renunciation of the devil and your consecration to the Triune God. Since then you have grown up, you are able to speak, and now you declare: "We ourselves want to repeat publicly this confession with our own lips: we ourselves wish to confirm the covenant which we once made with the Triune God in our Baptism." My dear children, that is a great triumph for Christ and for His Church. Remember that in all these years, between your Baptism and this day, the mighty prince of darkness, the devil, has walked about you as a roaring lion, seeking whom he might devour. Day and night he sought your ruin; by snares and temptations he tried to steal your hearts from the Good Shepherd,

to trip you into sin, shame, and unbelief, to wreck your frail vessel with eternal destruction. But—he has so far failed. He may glare upon you with cruel desire, but so far he has failed to lay hold of you. With triumphant joy we defy him to-day in the words of our ancient battle-hymn:

This world's prince may still
Scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none.

Blessed be the Lord who has not given you as a prey to his teeth; your soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers. To-day the devil must hear it that you, whom he has pursued night and day for years, again renounce him and all his works, reject all his offers, and take up anew the armor of God therewith to fight against him till final victory crowns your life.—And to-day you again hail the King of your hearts from whom Satan tried to tear you, the Lord Jesus Christ, with the words of devoted homage and loyalty: "*Hosanna to Thee, Thou Son of David; blessed art Thou who comest in the name of the Lord! Thine are we, and on Thy side, Thou Son of Jesse. Peace, peace be unto Thee, and peace be to Thine helpers; for Thy God helpeth Thee!*"

Aye, indeed, it is a joyful day, my dear children. For Christ and His Church it is a day of triumph. But it is *not* the *final* victory. Right from here you and I are going back into the thick of the battle. And we may be sure that the old evil foe will still mean you deadly woe. O children, will you still hate him unto the end, and cling unto your glorious King and gracious Savior Jesus Christ? I am sure your heart answers, "We will, we will!"—Ah, others have said it, their tears bearing witness of their devotion, and yet they have grown weary under the Captain of their salvation, they have gone away, broken troth and faith, forsaken Christ, and loved this present world.—But I will not now stop to bewail them, I will rather do that which is my blessed duty, and which I have often done before: I will speak to you the Word of God, that Word which is able to save you, to strengthen you for the conflict, and to lead you to the final victory. The particular word of your Lord to which I invite your attention for the present is found in Rev. 3, 11: "*Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*" I call your attention to:

THE APPEAL OF YOUR KING: "HOLD THAT FAST WHICH THOU HAST!"

Consider

- I. *The great treasure which you possess, and*
- II. *How you may hold it fast till Christ comes.*

I.

To each of you, dear children, God says to-day: "Hold that fast which thou hast!" To what does He refer? What is it that you are to hold fast? When God first spoke these words to the Bishop of Philadelphia He meant the Word of God which that bishop had accepted and had kept till then. And that is just what He means when He appeals to you: "Hold that fast which thou hast!" You also have the Word of God and all the riches which that word contains. During the last months you have met repeatedly for the avowed purpose of becoming more familiar with the teachings of the Word of God. Now, although you have not learned to know all that God says in His Word, yet the chief parts of it you do know. You know, and by faith you are possessors of, the most precious treasures of this storehouse of eternal wealth. You are fully persuaded that it is God Himself who speaks to you in the Bible.

This you know, then, that in the Bible you have an infallible guide to direct you in all that you are to believe and to do. Oh, consider how great is the treasure which you possess—you have an infallible guide to eternal joys and to perfect happiness. You are rich, for you can joyfully cry out: "Thy Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light upon our path." But look again at your treasure. Its highest value has not yet been pointed out. God's Word does not show you the way of works, but the way of *faith*. If the Bible would tell you, "Take the commandments of God and obey them, every one, at all times, and with your whole heart, and you will reach heaven," then it would also be an infallible and true guide, but it would point out a way which none of you can go. It would then be like the sun when he lights up some impassable mountain at which we may look with intense desire, but also with increasing despair. No, praised be God, the Bible points out not the way of the Law, which none of you can take, but it points out the way of the Gospel. It tells you that God has had mercy upon your weakness, sin, and misery, and has sent His almighty Son to come to you, to become your brother, and to bring you with Himself to heaven. It tells you that this Son of God, our dear Lord Jesus Christ, has taken your sin upon Himself and has redeemed you from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for you. It tells you that for you the Law is fulfilled, your sins are forgiven, and that Jesus stands ready to take your hand, and, through His word of pardon and comfort, to lead you on from strength to strength, till a crown of everlasting glory shall rest upon you which no one will be able to take from you again. In short, in the Bible you have a gracious and almighty Savior who is able to save you unto the uttermost.

Tell me, are you not rich? Indeed, you now possess the greatest treasure that anyone has ever had or can have here in this world. You have Christ and all those precious blessings which Christ bought at the greatest price ever paid for any blessings, His own precious blood and His innocent suffering and death. See, if, because of the weakness of your flesh, you fall into sin, here in His Word God richly and daily forgives all sins to you. If you are cast down and depressed, sad and gloomy, God's Word can drive away all gloom, assuage every sorrow, and fill your hearts with patience and even with sweet delights, joy, and gladness. If you are in distress and know not how to help yourselves; yea, though all other helpers fail, here you have a Helper who never fails. For Him no difficulty is too difficult, no obstacle too great. With Him nothing shall be impossible. If you lack wisdom, He knoweth all things; if you need guidance, He leadeth beside the still waters and in the paths of righteousness. He will not suffer your foot to be moved. If Satan assaults you with temptations, if the world beckons and entices, here, in His Word, your Captain gives you the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And when you grow faint and weary in the race and your spirit droops, then Jesus is ready again with His Word to restore your soul, to revive your courage, and to endue you with new strength, so that you may lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and to run with patience the race that is set before you.—Let even your enemies plan and scheme against you, as in the case of Joseph, their evil God will turn to good, their curses God will convert into rich blessings. And when your course is finished and death approacheth, you need not fear, for here in the Word of God you have the assurance that Christ has abolished death for you and brought life and immortality to light. Here Christ assures you that the believer's death is only a sleep from which the almighty Prince of Life shall awaken His children to give them a life free from all ill and full of everlasting delights.

O children, how rich you are! I have but given you a brief account of the priceless treasure which you possess. The more you think upon it the richer and happier you will appear, for you possess that one thing which is needful to change your life from a downward path to ruin to an upward path to eternal glory. All the gold and silver of this world, all the wisdom of the wise, the nobility of kings, and the power of the great are dung compared to that precious treasure which you possess. What is all worldly, earthly prosperity if men have not the Savior? God declares that "the

prosperity of fools shall destroy them," Prov. 1, 32. Without Christ the very greatest temporal prosperity is a curse to its possessor. But you who have Christ and His Word—your very sorrows, tears, battles, and sufferings will be turned into eternal rejoicings.—Oh, indeed, when you behold what God has given you, you have cause to exclaim :

When all Thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.

Oh, therefore, children, hold fast, hold fast that which you have! Let no one delude you to believe that he can give you something better. The enemies of your soul will try to do that. Satan will come to you as he came to Eve. Adam and Eve had paradise itself, happiness, righteousness, and innocence. But Satan made them believe that he could and would give them something better. You know the result—they lost all they had, and received in its stead sin, sorrow, and despair. Be warned; hold fast that which thou hast, the Christ of the Bible; in Him and with Him you have God's grace and favor here and heaven itself hereafter. It is impossible to gain anything better—but it is possible to lose all and become unspeakably wretched and miserable. God preserve you, dear children, God preserve you! Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. And if you must, because of it, let everything else go, *let it all go*, hold Christ, hold fast His Word, and all that you lose will be a gain to you. For:

The gain of this one thing all loss can requite,
And teach you in all things to find true delight.

II.

But, my beloved children, when I think of the mighty foes who are waiting to rob you of your treasure, and consider your weakness, my heart is filled with apprehension and would fail me for fear. For it is true, you are going forth as lambs among wolves. Hear, then, also *how you are to hold fast that which you have*.

And right here I must warn you against one serious mistake that has been the undoing of thousands. Do not trust in yourself, in your own goodness, wisdom, or power. The Bible says: "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool," Prov. 28, 26. Do not be such fools. What would you think of a child that would go forth to fasten a rope to the sun in order to prevent him from setting? But just so foolish would you be if you set out to defy Satan, hell, and sin in your own strength. Learn, rather, to say with that great warrior of God:

With might of ours can naught be done,
Soon were our loss effected.

“But, say you, how can we, then, hold fast that which we have?” God Himself tells you when He says: “*He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*” And the same Lord tells you: “It is *God* which worketh in you both to will and to do.” See, children, it is *God* who Himself alone can give you strength and can enable you to hold fast what you have. Appeal to Him, therefore, in daily prayer, beseech Him to keep you in the true faith, ask Him to preserve you from falling a prey to Satan’s malice and spite, seek God’s help in your trials, knock and keep knocking at heaven’s door till it is opened, and you are blessed with faithful endurance unto the end. And the more severe your trials, and the weaker and the more sinful you find yourself to be the more earnestly and the more frequently cry to God for help. He will hear and will deliver you, for He has promised it to you in His holy Word. He does not delight in the death of the sinner. He wants all men to be saved. The Lord is not willing that any should perish.

Therefore He has prepared and given you also a mighty means and instrument which is able to preserve you in His grace. St. Paul points to that powerful means of safety when he says: “I am not ashamed of the *Gospel* of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” Indeed, God’s Word is not only a priceless treasure, but it is also a strong weapon and defense against each and every foe. Every Christian should not only rejoice in it as his most precious possession, but must also learn to use it as his all-powerful *weapon*. And so you children, as you prize the Word of God as more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold, so use this Word daily as a means to preserve unto you the blessings which you now call your own. Your heart is weak, treacherous, and deceitful, but the Word of God which you hear and read will “*stablish, strengthen, settle you.*” It will drive out doubt and uncleanness, and fill you with the faith which overcometh the world. The world will allure you, but the Word of God which you hear and read will show you the world’s folly and deceit and draw your hearts away from false men unto the true and faithful Bridegroom of your soul. The devil may whisper and entice, but if you diligently hear and read God’s Word, it will thwart the purpose of Satan and break his power over you.

O children, be earnest, prayerful, attentive hearers of God’s Word. It is the one thing, the only thing that can preserve you and give you strength to hold fast your eternal riches. The more you experience the weakness of your flesh, the more you are tempted, the hotter the conflict becomes, the oftener you ought to take your

refuge to God's Word and pray God to bless you through it and keep you steadfast in His Word and faith unto the end.

And there is the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in which the Word of God is sealed with the body and blood of Christ, your Savior. This Sacrament Christ has given that therein you may gain strength against your mighty enemies. Do not despise it. There you will be refreshed and endued with new power to stand against all the wiles of the devil. Let nothing and no one prevent you from receiving the Lord's Supper frequently.

Watch over your treasure, children; keep that which is committed unto you, hold fast that which you have, fight the good fight of faith. It is but a short time. "Behold," says Christ, "behold, I come quickly." Soon, soon He will come to take you from the battle of this life, and to give you the crown of victory. Blessed, yes, blessed he that has been faithful unto death! Then, when the world, its lust, its joy, its glory, and its pride will have passed away, and all who loved it will perish shamefully, then will the faithful confessor of Christ appear clothed in white raiment, his name confessed before heaven and earth as the name of a great conqueror; then he will be raised to sit with Christ on His throne. Yes, then shall be fulfilled of all those who have kept the faith the precious words of the elder: "These are they which come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Children, do you not wish to be there? Oh, then, "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown!"

Thine forever! God of love,
Hear us from Thy throne above;
Thine forever may we be,
Here and in eternity.

Thine forever! Savior, keep
These Thy frail and trembling sheep!
Safe alone beneath Thy care,
Let us all Thy goodness share.

Thine forever! Thou our Guide,
All our wants by Thee supplied,
All our sins by Thee forgiven,
Lead us, Lord, from earth to heaven.

Amen.

M. S. S.

Outlines for Sermons on the Gospel-Lessons.

Fifth Sunday in Lent.

JOHN 8, 46—59.

The faith of a believing Jew of Old Testament times is the faith of the Christian of to-day. The Jews believed in the *promised* Messiah, we believe in Jesus the Messiah who *has* come. But the Jews at the time of Christ who rejected Him are the unbelievers of to-day.

THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS IS THE UNBELIEF OF THE WORLD TO-DAY.

Their unbelief is identical

I. *In its pretensions and claims.*

a. The Jews deny, vv. 44. 47 b. They claim Abraham as their father, v. 39, and God, v. 41. Their claims are lofty. Understanding and enlightenment in their religion is their boast. Compare what Christ says, vv. 51. 52 b. 56, with vv. 48. 52. 53. 57. — Modern unbelievers do the same. Reason is their god, and light and enlightenment is their watchword. While the Jews still laid claim to the religion of their fathers, our unbelievers bow only to the religion of nature. They say: "The light of reason is sufficient to know God. His power and wisdom may be seen and fully comprehended from the works of creation. Revelation is a superstition. There are no miracles. Man (evolution). The God-man a fiction," etc.

b. The Jews reject Christ and His Word, and imagine that thus they are pleasing to God and heirs of the life to come. So the unbelievers boast of their commendable life. "Do right—fear no one. Give to all men freedom of thought and action. Regard all men as children of the Father."

Such are the claims—what is the reality?

II. *In its reality.*

a. The unbelief of the Jews is folly. Says Christ: v. 46. They had been seeking to entrap Him, to convince Him of sin. Many knew better: John 3, 12. — Folly to know and yet not believe. Says Christ: v. 51. And He had proved His Word by miracles. They knew it. — Says Christ: vv. 54. 56. 58. — John 10, 37. 38. It certainly is folly not to believe that which is so manifest. — So the unbelief of modern unbelievers is folly. They reject the Bible, the truth of which is proved by so many miracles, by its effect upon the heart and life. Ex.: Apostles and the heathen world, *et al.* They reject the Bible though they know that it has been so wonderfully preserved. They ridicule Christ, the God-man, and yet through Him the whole world has been changed, by the simple preaching of the Gospel through sinful men.

b. It is service of sin and enmity against God. The Jews are ready to commit murder, v. 59. Since Christ is the Son of God their enmity against Him is enmity against God. — So the unbelievers of to-day. Their ungodly life is a service of sin, be they open or hidden, as murder, adultery, etc., or pride, egotism, anger,

hatred, deceit, etc. Decline of faith is followed by increase of immorality, suicides, divorces, murder, theft, etc.

Those are the claims and this is the reality of unbelief. Shall we who have the true light and true wisdom exchange it for darkness and folly? Shall we who as Christians are the children of God and have the mastery of sin become slaves to sin and enemies of God?

Sto.

Sermon Outlines for the Lenten Season.

D.

2 COR. 5, 21.

In our previous discourses we considered the high sanction, the necessity, and the nature of Christ's Passion.

THE MANNER OF CHRIST'S PASSION.

Christ suffered:—

I. *Voluntarily.*

a. *Explanation.* a. Christ Jesus was not taken as an unwilling victim to suffer and to die for us. β. God made Him to be sin (sin-offering) for us. γ. Christ Jesus "gave Himself for our sins." There is no compulsion! Ps. 40, 9. John 10, 18.

b. *Application.* Comfort. Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us, cheerfully, willingly, gladly, in order to make atonement for our sins. Christ is just as willing to save as He is willing to suffer. —Example, 1 Pet. 2, 21.

II. *Innocently.*

a. *Explanation.* a. Being sinners, we needed a Savior who was perfectly righteous, sinless in His own person, Hebr. 7, 26, 27. β. In Christ Jesus we have such a Savior. He knew no sin, Matt. 27, 4. Luke 23, 14.

b. *Exhortation.* Let us thank God for having such a sinless, perfect Savior whose righteousness is a perfect righteousness, and whose life is a blameless one. In ourselves and in our doings we shall find everything to be imperfect; but in Christ we have a perfect, sinless Representative and Substitute.

III. *Vicariously.*

a. *Explanation.* a. Christ suffered not for His own sins. He was sinless. He knew no sin. β. Christ suffered for our sins. God made Him to be sin for us. He "bare our sins in His own body." He "suffered for sin, the Just for the unjust." He "was made a curse for us." 1 Pet. 2, 22; 3, 18. Gal. 3, 13. Hebr. 9, 28. Is. 53, 5, 6. We see this truth in every part of His Passion.

b. *Exhortation.* a. Let us take heed, that, having such great salvation, we really make good use of it for our own souls. May we never rest till we can say in true faith, Christ is mine, and I am His. β. Let us ever bless God for setting such a glorious salvation before us.

Our plea is, and ever must be, not that we are deserving of acquittal, but that Christ has suffered and died for us.

IV. *Meritoriously.*

a. This is the plain doctrine of our text: "That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

b. We see this important truth in every part of Christ's Passion. We see Jesus delivered into the hands of His enemies. This was that we, the sinful children of men, believing on Him, might be delivered from sin, death, and hell.—We see Jesus insulted. This was that we, vile as we are, might have glory, honor, and eternal life through faith in Christ.—We see Jesus stripped of His garments. This was that we, who have no righteousness of our own, might be the righteousness of God in Him.—We see Jesus condemned. This was that we might be counted blessed for Christ's sake, Gal. 3, 13.—We see Jesus reckoned a sinner. This was that we may be reckoned innocent for Christ's sake.—We see Jesus mocked in His dying hour. This was that we, in our last hour, through faith in Jesus may have strong consolation. "Thanks be to God for this unspeakable gift."

E.

Is. 53, 4. 5.

Review of the preceding.

THE CAUSE OF CHRIST'S PASSION.

I. *It was our sin.*

a. *Explanation.* a. Sin is an act against God's Law, and, consequently, against God Himself. β. Sin, our sin, the sin of the world, is the cause of Christ's Passion. Text. OUR griefs, OUR sorrows, OUR transgressions, OUR iniquities.

b. *Application.* a. Warning. Caution. How great an evil must sin be! How awful its demerits! How deep its stain, when nothing less than the Passion, priceless blood, and death of the Son of God could expiate its guilt! Stand in awe, and sin not!—LUTHER: "We should learn from the bitter Passion of Christ how heavy and great a load sin is, because it thus oppressed and afflicted the Son of God." (See *House Postil*, vol. II, p. 69; Notes on the Gospels, p. 145.) β. Comfort. LUTHER: "The Passion of Christ should be a comfort to us, since we see how the Son of God has borne our sins. What Christ suffered was for our benefit."

II. *It was the wrath of God.*

a. *Explanation.* a. Not Christ, but we all have sinned, and on account of our sins deserved God's wrath and displeasure. β. Not His, but our sins were the real cause of His Passion. Our sins were laid on Him, have been imputed to Him. On account of our sins, which were imputed to Him, He suffered God's wrath. He was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted, on account of our sins. "Since Christ Jesus became the Substitute for us all, and took upon Himself our sins, that He might bear God's terrible wrath against sin and expiate our guilt, He necessarily felt the entire wrath of

God." (Luther.) The terrible wrath of God against sin is revealed in the flood, Gen. 7; in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha, Gen. 19; of Jerusalem. But more so in the Passion of Christ.

b. *Warning.* Stand in awe of God's wrath against sin. LUTHER: "If we could only comprehend the wrath of God which is revealed (in Christ's Passion) against sin, and His judgment which awaits it, we would no longer desire and love sin, but would fear it and flee from it as though it were sudden death."

III. *It was Satan's malice.*

a. *Explanation.* a. All through our dear Savior's ministry on earth He was tempted, assailed, and opposed by Satan, Hebr. 4, 15. Luke 4, 13. β. But in the Passion of Christ Satan came with special violence and bitter wrath to make his last and most violent attack on our Savior. Now "the prince of this world cometh" up with his utmost malice to try the second Adam. He was mustering all his strength for one more tremendous onset, John 14, 30. Gen. 3, 15.

b. *Exhortation.* If Satan came to Christ, he will also come to us. Therefore, let us all watch and pray daily against his devices. — Let us finally learn what a sympathizing Savior the Lord Jesus Christ is, Hebr. 2, 18.

F.

Is. 53, 10. 11.

We have considered the high sanction, the necessity, and the nature of Christ's Passion. Let us finally consider

THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S PASSION.

Christ suffered:—

I. *To remove eternal condemnation.*

a. The objects of Christ's sufferings. The sinner, sinful mankind, Matt. 18, 11. "He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature."

b. The result of Christ's suffering. He was made an offering for sin, and thus purchased and won sinful mankind from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood, etc. 1 John 1, 7. 1 Pet. 1, 18. 19. — Col. 1, 12—14.

II. *To introduce eternal salvation.*

a. The blessed Author of eternal salvation. a. Jesus, the Lord's Servant, Is. 42, 1. — β. Jesus, the righteous Servant, 1 John 2, 1.

b. The glorious nature of eternal salvation obtained and introduced by Christ Jesus. In what does eternal salvation consist? On earth, in grace, forgiveness of sins, peace, joy, etc. In heaven, in everlasting happiness, etc.

c. The universal extent of eternal salvation. a. He shall see his seed—seeds. β. He shall justify many.

d. The manner in which it is obtained. a. Not by works, Rom. 3, 28. β. Through faith, Eph. 2, 8. Rom. 10, 4. John 3, 16.

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